

INTERNATIONAL LONGSHORE AND WAREHOUSE UNION
PACIFIC COAST PENSIONERS ASSOCIATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
LABOR ARCHIVES OF WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON LIBRARIES SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

DIANE MIDDLETON OF NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD, LOS ANGELES HARBOR COMMISSION

INTERVIEWEE: DIANE MIDDLETON

INTERVIEWERS: HARVEY SCHWARTZ, CONOR CASEY

SUBJECTS: NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD; DETROIT; DAVID ARIAN; LOS ANGELES; SAN PEDRO; ASBESTOS; DIANE MIDDLETON FOUNDATION; CITY COMMISSION JOBS; LOS ANGELES HARBOR COMMISSION; AUTOMATION

LOCATION: REMOTE INTERVIEW VIA ZOOM

DATE: NOVEMBER 5, 2024

INTERVIEW LENGTH: 01:32:02

FILE NAME: MiddletonDiane_PCPA_2024_Video_acc6194-009.mp4

The Labor Archives of Washington is committed to preserving the voices and stories of individuals who have contributed to the labor movement's rich history. The LAW presents oral history interviews as part of its contribution to helping curate and create access to a broad and inclusive historical record. These interviews contain the personal recollections and opinions of the individuals involved and, therefore, may contain language, ideas or stereotypes that are offensive or harmful to others.

Individual oral histories cannot serve as the sole source of historical information about an institution or event. These narratives do not represent the views of the Labor Archives of Washington, Libraries Special Collections, or the University of Washington, past or present.

HARVEY SCHWARTZ 00:00:11

This is Harvey Schwartz. I'm with Diane Middleton today. She's in San Pedro, California. This is part of the Pacific Coast Pensioners Oral History Program. And Diane, can you tell me when you were born, where you were born?

DIANE MIDDLETON 00:00:30

Sure. I was born in 1943 in Detroit, Michigan.

HARVEY 00:00:35

In Detroit. Okay, can you tell me a little bit about your parents, about their background, about their jobs and their interests?

DIANE 00:00:44

Sure. My father--they've both passed now. My father was Italian, born and raised in St Louis [Missouri]. He was a musician. His parents were immigrants, and he moved to Detroit in the early 1940's and met my mom. My mom is Polish. Her entire family worked in the auto factories from the very, very early days. Her parents started to work at Dodge Main in 1917 when it still made bicycles. So we had a very traditional family. My dad had a business. It was a music studio, and at one time it was the largest music studio in Michigan. And of course, it was in a Polish-Ukrainian neighborhood. Most of the people studied accordion. So that's--we lived above the business, which was kind of an unusual thing. And my mom worked in the business and worked afternoons. So that was me growing up.

HARVEY 00:01:44

You mentioned the auto industry. Were your relatives and friends and so forth affiliated at all with United Auto Workers?

DIANE 00:01:53

I'm sorry, I can't hear you.

HARVEY 00:01:55

Oh, you'd mentioned that your family on your mother's side, I believe you said, were auto workers.

DIANE 00:02:03

Yes, they all worked in the auto factory, and they all were very active in the United Auto Workers. And it was a very great influence on me that all of the relatives--my dad's family was in St Louis, so I'd only see them once a year, but all of my mom's relatives would recount their stories. You know, my aunt's working in a certain section of the plant, and they'd describe walking the picket line to try and get a pension, you know, many, many years before. And they regaled me with their stories of supporting the union and how much the union meant to them.

HARVEY 00:02:39

That's great. Can you tell me a little bit about your youth? You mentioned kind of an important sentence about you being a young woman searching for identity. Which side are you on, which side are you on? Can you fill us in a little bit about that?

DIANE 00:02:56

Let me go back a little before that. This was the 1940's and the 1950's. Women got married. They raised a family. They didn't go to school. That was the tradition in my family. And likewise for young men, they were taken to the job by their fathers. My mom had two sisters and one brother, and when her brother turned eighteen, my grandpa took him to the factory and said, "My kid's eighteen. What do you have for him?" And he started working at the same place my grandpa did. So that's kind of what the expectations were.

Because my parents worked nights, because this music studio was open from two in the afternoon till ten at night and we lived above it, I was sort of a latchkey kid, except I didn't need a latchkey. I just walked up the stairs. But I was on my own most of the time. And a very, very big influence in my life was the corner. I didn't have a corner store, I had a corner library. A block from our house was a public library. And in those days, I mean, my family never bought books. I went to the library and read them there. And I met an amazing woman named Clara [Stanton] Jones who became a really close friend. She was the librarian, and she would always talk

to me about what books I was reading. And from a very early age, she told me, "You're going to go to college. You're really smart, and you're going to go to college." And nobody in my family had said that. I met her when I was probably ten years old, and the reason she was such an influence in my life is because, of course, Detroit was quite segregated back in the forties and fifties, and we lived in a Polish-Ukrainian, which is to say white, neighborhood. Clara Jones was African American, and she was the smartest person I had ever met.

As I grew into my teens, our relationship of her being a mentor, it became even deeper, and she invited me over to her home to meet her daughter. So I got to meet her daughter, who was about a year older than me. She lived on the other side of town. And interestingly enough, she lived in a much nicer area, because we lived in a factory neighborhood, and she lived in a neighborhood where skilled workers would live. So the houses were a little nice. And again, we lived above my dad's store, so it was real different from all the other kids. Anyway, in the course of this relationship with Mrs. Jones, as I got to know the family, I mean, I was amazed because her husband, who had a PhD, was working in the post office, because that was the only place an African American man could get a job in the fifties.

So it was a tremendous influence on me. And of course, I assumed that all Black people were really, really smart, because this was the only one I met, and she was a lot smarter than everybody I knew. So it was a wonderful relationship. This woman went on to become the first African American woman who was the head of a major library. She eventually became the CEO of the Detroit Public Library, but she had a tremendous influence on me. That was definitely the reason I went to college, and I remained friends with her daughter until I started dating in my teens and double dating with Vanetta and her husband.

HARVEY 00:06:34

That's great. Around that period of time, I gather there's a young Japanese group associated with a guy named Warren [?Furutani?]. This is probably in the 1960's. You've mentioned that as also being something important in your early years.

DIANE 00:06:50

Much, much later. When you say there was a group, I think you're probably talking about a group--if you're talking about Warren [?Furutani?], that would have been in the very recent years.

HARVEY 00:07:00

That would have been in recent years?

DIANE 00:07:02

Yeah, I mean like five years ago, ten years ago to now.

HARVEY 00:07:07

Okay.

DIANE 00:07:07

Go back in Detroit, sort of chronologically, because I think that's what you're doing. The next thing that happened is, as I graduated from my all girl Catholic high school, I was--I mean, the accepted thing to do was to get married. Met my boyfriend when I was fifteen, my first husband. And interestingly enough, well, he was the first boy I ever met that read books. He lived on the other side of town and went to an all boy Catholic high school. And you know, I started dating him when I was fifteen, family friends, that kind of thing. Got married when I was nineteen. At that point I had started Wayne State University. We were married for five years, and by the time I was in my mid-twenties, actually, I was like whatever 1968 would have been. I was twenty-five years

old. We separated, wonderful man. We just were too young when we got married. And of course, I did have a son who was born in--[I] was married in '63, he was born in '66.

And you know, it's just I could see myself becoming my parents. And that was the period of the greatest questioning, when I sort of asked, "What is this all about?" And it was as a result of Mrs. Jones and all the books she had me reading and so on, I sort of came to understand, wait a second, there's got to be more to life than finding one man, getting married, having kids and having a nice little life. This is a big world. By this time, in the late sixties, there was a question of women's rights, civil rights, anti-Vietnam War, all sorts of things were happening that I wasn't part of in Detroit, but I wanted to know about. And it sort of all came down to which side are you on. And that became a fundamental turning point for me, when I had to decide if I wanted to cross that line and look at the bigger world around me and what part I would play in it, and how I would make a contribution.

HARVEY 00:08:19

Great. I want to ask you just a little bit about Wayne State. You went to Wayne State for college. What did you major in?

DIANE 00:09:31

Interesting. When I started, I majored in history and sociology, but it was a real illustrative lesson that I share with kids today. I never thought about, what am I going to do with a degree in history and sociology? What will it equip me to do? And I sort of thought sociology would be this wonderful world of interacting with people and learning about groups. And of course, it wasn't. As I took more advanced sociology courses, I found out that what I'd be doing is designing studies and helping people check boxes. And I really didn't want to do that.

So in the interim, I graduated high school in 1961, started college, got married in '63, went to work, because in those days, in our--and I say this somewhat sarcastically, there might be good things to be said about Catholic school education. I certainly had a fine education, learned how to read and all that sort of thing, but it was this odd situation where I realized, you know, when I was married, I was going to have to get a job. Both my husband and I were working, and although I had only eighteen months of college and not a single class in teaching, I got a job in a Catholic school teaching sixty first graders with no experience whatsoever.

So I did that for a couple years, and by the time my husband and I separated in 1968, I had a year and a half of college and nothing else, had taught for a while. So it was the height of the Vietnam War, and an offhand remark, a friend said, "You know, what are you going to do with this history degree? You like history, why don't you go to law school? Law school is studying about history. That might be a good fit for you." And at the time, Wayne State had a program where if you completed three years of college, your fourth year of college, or your first year of law school would serve as your fourth year of college and give you a BA degree. So that's what I did. Never took the LSAT.

I went to the university, and in 1968 when I started Wayne State Law School, there were four women in my class of 125. And when I was applying for admission, I said, "Look, I'm newly divorced. I'm going to get, which was then the magnificent sum of \$300 a month in alimony for nine months. So this first year of law school, I have to go to law school, because I'm only going to get this money for nine months, and it will enable me to not have to work full time." So even though I hadn't taken the LSAT, I think they probably were desperate to fill the seats, because this was the time when young men were being drafted. So I got into law school in 1968, never having taken the LSAT, one of four women, and finished law school in 1971.

HARVEY 00:12:48

What was it like being one of only four women in law school?

DIANE 00:12:53

Well, since I was a somewhat sheltered young woman--started dating when I was 15, married, when I was 19--I hadn't dated a lot. So to be one of four women and a class of 125 men, I will say that that first year of law school, the main thing that I did was go to the race horse and go to the track during the day to see the race horses, and then go to the track at night to see whatever they would call the trotters, they were horses that, you know, pulled these little not chariots, but whatever. And I played cards. I played bridge all day. And everybody had always said, "Oh, this is going to be hard, going from the local high school to the regional high school, going to college." And I always had all A's. So I thought, no problem, of course I'm going to get good grades. And I wound up being the second highest person on probation.

So I thought after that first year, okay, a little less card playing, little less going to the track, going to buckle down. So I did, and I finished school. And it was really sort of this interesting experience, you know, being surrounded, being so outnumbered by men. And I did have to work. And I had interesting jobs going through law school. I mainly worked as a model in the auto shows, I was a narrator. So I put myself through law school working the auto shows in New York, Chicago, and Detroit. So that was kind of interesting and endeared me to my classmates, if you will, because it was a somewhat unique job.

HARVEY 00:14:42

It's remarkable.

DIANE 00:14:44

It's also, more significantly, where I had my first encounter with the National Lawyers Guild.

HARVEY 00:14:50

Yeah, I was going to say the National Lawyers Guild Labor Committee, you were there, gathered for five years?

DIANE 00:14:57

Yes, what happened was when I was in law school, the guild had a student chapter. And I, of course, had never heard of the National Lawyers Guild, but I was quite impressed when I did hear about it. Sufficiently impressed that when I graduated law school in 1971, I was ready for a change. And of course, in 1971, you were girl from Detroit, and I grew up right outside of Hamtramck, which was the third largest Polish city at that time, behind Warsaw and Chicago. And I kind of thought, well, I really want something different. So I moved to San Francisco, not having taken the bar and not knowing a single person, but I had these illusions of, you know, representing the Black Panther Party and the downtrodden and the oppressed.

So I moved to San Francisco and started studying for the California bar, you know, went to work, got a job, and joined the National Lawyers Guild. And this was an interesting time for the Guild because in 1971, you know, there was, of course, the Old Left and the New Left. And the Old Left in the guild was quite admirable. They were the people that fought to be the labor lawyers for FDR's [Franklin Delano Roosevelt] New Deal. They they represented people who were prosecuted under the Smith Act. I mean, the National Lawyers Guild, it was the organization of George Shibley, you know, the outstanding ILWU lawyer in southern California.

So I really got involved with the National Lawyers Guild. And one of the big issues was the Labor Committee, because the old labor movement was the unions that were evicted, if you will, thrown out of the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations], the AFL-CIO. And the new labor movement was the United Farm Workers, for example. And in fact, one of the issues that roiled the National Lawyers Guild the most were the people who

said, "You have to support the farmworkers under any condition," and the people that said, "The United Farm Workers under Cesar Chavez are working with la migra to deport people. We can't possibly support Cesar Chavez." So that was the kind of issue that was developing in the New Left. But I was very, very active in the National Lawyers Guild Labor Committee from 1971 when I moved out to California, until 1976. Well, let's just say I was active in the Guild for many years with particularly the Labor Committee.

HARVEY 00:17:50

Well, you mentioned at one point that there was a wildcat strike at that time?

DIANE 00:17:57

That's right. So I was in San Francisco from '71 to '73 working with the National Lawyers Guild. And then through my work in the Guild, I met this outstanding law firm from Detroit that I didn't know prior to moving. And this firm was very interesting. It was called Glotta, Adelman and Dinges, and it was the New Left law firm in Detroit. They represented all the wildcat strikers. They had the unique distinction of Leonard Woodcock calling them "industrial ambulance chasers," meaning, if there was a strike, they showed up on the picket lines and said, "Who wants a lawyer? We're going to represent you to enable the strike to have legs."

The firm made its money through representing injured workers, mainly auto, steel and hospital. And that was also very formative for me, because in those days, in the mid-seventies, workers compensation was the dregs of the practice, either a notch above or a notch below, criminal defense, but certainly not on a par with those outstanding lawyers that did corporate work and tax work and property transactions. But the Glotta firm taught me that to the individual and individual injured worker, these cases were enormously important, because all the working man or woman had was their ability to get up and go to the job in the morning. And when they were injured and that was called into question, it was a really big deal. So they deserve the highest quality of representation, and that's how we approached those cases.

We also made startling law. Again, in the late--I think it probably happened in the late sixties, early seventies. There was an auto worker named James Johnson: African American, raised in the South, saw an uncle castrated by the Klan when he was a young boy, came up North, went to work for Chrysler, and had a racist foreman that called him every slur you can imagine for a Black man, refused to let him take his vacation, and just generally harassed him. Until one day, James Johnson got a shotgun and went back into the plant and killed his foreman and two other people. Our law firm represented him and got him workers compensation benefits on the theory that Chrysler pulled the trigger and that none of this would have happened but for the oppressive racist conditions that Chrysler allowed to continue. So of course, this was quite a shock in Detroit. Another section of the law firm represented him on the criminal charges, and he was found not guilty by reason of lack of mental capacity. There really is no such thing as insanity, people think there is, but not. So that case was very typical of what we did.

We also represented the League of Revolutionary Black Workers and folks in the progressive movement [you] may be familiar with, icons like General Baker and Chuck Wooten and folks that took on the UAW. The reason they took on the UAW was because during this period in the 1970's, there were tens of thousands of African American auto workers and not a single one above the level of shop steward. So the League of Revolutionary Black Workers said, "UAW stands for 'If you ain't white, you ain't right.'" So they battled the UAW for a fair shake, and one of their leaders, General Baker, ran for the Michigan House of Representatives. And because he was a national figure in the movement against concessions and a lot of other things, movement against right to work laws and so on, labor leaders from around the country came to support him when he ran for Congress, for the Michigan House. And one of those leaders was David Arian. So David Arian came to Detroit. I was General's lawyer. We met each other, and that was the start of my sojourn to Southern California for fifty years.

HARVEY 00:22:31

My God. You were yourself representing James Johnson?

DIANE 00:22:39

No, by the time I got to the firm, the case was on appeal. It had been tried. But it was of such notoriety that, I mean, it was, you know, it didn't go away. I mean, that reputation stuck with us for all the years I was with the firm.

HARVEY 00:22:55

Okay. You know, to my impression, that little bit after that, I gather you're in San Francisco, or at that point anyway, you were representing a lot of shipyard workers?

DIANE 00:23:09

No, I'm in San Francisco from '71 to '73. I move back to Detroit, and I'm with--

HARVEY 00:23:13

Oh you're back in Detroit, okay.

DIANE 00:23:15

--the law firm from '73 to '78. And during that period of time, in 1976, Dave came to Detroit. We got together, and depending on who's telling the story, Dave or me--although I pretty much agree. Dave's story was he never invited me to come out here, I invited myself. But I came out to San Pedro, had never been in Southern California, and moved out here in 1978 and have been here ever since. So from 1978, my history is definitely connected solely to San Pedro.

HARVEY 00:23:56

Okay. When is it that you began to do all the cases that are related to asbestos problems?

DIANE 00:24:04

Well, when I came out here in 1978, of course I looked for a job as an attorney. And I was very fortunate to hook up with one of the premier Old Left law firms, Margolis-McTernan. And these were legendary lawyers who did represent FDR and the New Deal legislation in the '30's. Ben Margolis represented many of the Smith Act defendants. John McTernan represented many of the unions, the CIO unions, on labor law issues. And I joined that firm. They had a big fancy office on Wilshire Boulevard and a little satellite office in Wilmington. And of course, like all good Pedro people, I quickly formed the conclusion that I never wanted to go to LA. I just wanted to stay in Pedro.

So I joined the firm in 1978, was with the firm for a year. During that period of time, I met shipyard workers in San Pedro, and there was a Progressive Caucus within IUMSWA: Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America, Local 9, an industrial union that represented all the shipyard workers. They were starting to agitate around the question of asbestos, and they wanted a lawyer to represent them against the large asbestos companies. And I became that lawyer. And under the direction and suggestion of the experienced lawyers at the Margolis firm, they said, "File a class action." And I, of course, fresh out of law school by five, six years, said, "There's no basis to file a class action. These cases are all different." And they said, "File it." And in no time, we were on the front pages of the LA Times, and we had six hundred asbestos cases. I understood at that time that with the connections I had in San Pedro, that my future was in San Pedro and not in this fancy firm in downtown on Wilshire Boulevard. So, you know, being fair minded, I graciously gave them a month's notice to

make plans, and they promptly looked at me and said, "Thank you. You can pack up your things today, and by the way, take those six hundred asbestos cases with you."

HARVEY 00:26:39

Wow.

DIANE 00:26:40

So I was horrified, right? I thought, what am I going to do with these cases? I don't even have an office yet! So from 19--I guess it was implied in what I said, that when I moved out here to be with Dave, it was at all times during the fifty years of our relationship a political relationship. We lived together as domestic partners from 1978 to 1983. During that period of time--

HARVEY 00:27:11

That's you and Dave?

DIANE 00:27:12

Pardon me?

HARVEY 00:27:14

This was with Dave?

DIANE 00:27:17

With Dave Arian. So we're living in San Pedro, and during this period of time when I left the Margolis firm, I had no way to support myself. I had no money, because in those days, particularly in left wing law firms, I mean, I think the Margolis firm offered me \$12,000 a year in 1978, which was slightly less than a shipyard worker was making, right? At any rate, so I wanted to start my own firm. And for the first two years, we lived on what Dave was earning as a longshoreman. And I started the firm, and I was able to make arrangements and take in partners and had these six hundred asbestos cases. And of course, it wasn't six hundred from the go. I mean, they built slowly, but eventually there were six hundred. So my law practice from 1978 until I retired forty years later was representing shipyard workers and longshoremen injured on the job.

HARVEY 00:28:25

My impression is that you ended up with about seven thousand cases that you dealt with during that period of time?

DIANE 00:28:35

I use that number mainly to show--and as we talk more, I'll explain more about my relationship to the ILWU and why I feel so strongly that I owe everything to the ILWU. But over the course of that period of time, from 1978 to 2008, I had seven thousand individual cases of injured workers. And the reason that number is so significant to me is because that's how I learned everything I did about the port and industrial work. I never turned to, but I always was very fact-based. And when people would come in with an injury, it was, "What is your job classification? What are your job duties? Where do you work? What do you do? Who do you work with? What is it all about?" And that's how I learned this enormous body of knowledge. In addition to which, if you were with Dave Arian, you were talking about longshore 24/7. That was the main consideration that Dave had.

So longshore was very much a major part of my life, and I learned a whole lot about the industry, the employers, you know, automation. Dave would start taking these trips. I remember probably--and now I'm

going to say Dave passed six years ago this January, so he passed in 2019. Probably in the late 1990's, he was the first person in the industry [who] went to Hamburg [Germany] and came back and started talking about automation and what was happening in Hamburg and Rotterdam. So it was the kind of thing where we talked all the time about the industry and what was happening, and also these seven thousand cases. That's how I learned what I did.

HARVEY 00:30:27

Exactly. You did a number of things in working with Dave Arian. That's my impression. For example, the founding of the Harry Bridges institute. Were you involved in that? I mean, and the Labor Day Parade in--

DIANE 00:30:44

Yes, I was. I came here in the seventies. Through the eighties, it was a period when I think both Dave and I were basically honing our craft, if you will. It was when I was working eighty hours a week as an attorney and when Dave was running for local office. And you know, I mean, I can't even remember all the different committees he was on: the registration committee, I know during this time he was very instrumental in developing the concept of a casual hall.

He ran for international president in 1991. I was his legal advisor. It was, I don't know, shocking, startling. It was different than anybody had seen, because up to 1991 there only had been two presidents of the ILWU: Harry Bridges and Jimmy Herman. So when Dave ran for office, there never had been a contested election, and Dave went out campaigning. He had a campaign committee at the time. Rough numbers in 1991, there were 50,000 ILWU members. 25,000 of them were in Hawaii, so we were going to campaign in Hawaii. And of course, in Hawaii, the local there, there's one large local, as everyone watching this would probably know, Local 142. And when we would go to Hawaii to campaign, we'd talk to these workers, and their thing was, "No, no, we don't vote in the international. We just vote for 142." They didn't know there was an international because there never had been this kind of presence. So there was a team of twenty-five of us that went to Hawaii. We were based in Maui, and I was kind of, you know, one of the main participants in this team. And we would get up. And there were different teams that did different things, but obviously we went to the sugar fields. We went to pine. We had--this wasn't my assignment--there were some people who were only too happy to hang out in all the bars because, of course, all the hotel workers belonged to the ILWU. So we had a whole group campaigning in Hawaii, and then there were all of the campaigning on the West Coast. And Dave hit every single port.

I was thinking of it this morning, because I knew we were going to be doing these interviews. And even though it was so etched in my mind, it has been thirty, forty years. As I remember that election, I think there were 25,000 people that voted, and I think Dave won by 110 votes. It was a very close election, and I was his attorney, so I attended all the IB [International Board] meetings. And there was a struggle over seating Dave, and I could sum it all up with the words of our very good friend Joe Lucas from Local 10 in that distinctly high voice of his, who said at the height of this dispute over whether Dave should be seated, Joe paused, and he said, "I'll tell you something. I used to go to the track with Harry all the time, and when Harry's horse won by a nose, he collected his money. Now as near as I can see, Dave just won by a nose, but he won, and he should be seated." And I like to think of that as being something that kind of swayed the body. And Dave was seated.

So he became international president in 1991. And of the first things he wanted to do is start something that would embody the principles that Harry stood for. And what was happening by 1991 is the industry was starting to grow, the membership was starting to grow, and particularly--and many of the things I'm going to say were direct quotes that I heard from Dave. Dave liked to say that the reason the port of Los Angeles was so successful was because it was so backward for so many years. And while San Francisco was developing and Oakland was developing, Los Angeles wasn't. So when containers came in, they had the land, because

enormous spaces needed to stage containers, and you didn't have that in San Francisco. You had [?to shore tracks?], you didn't have that in other ports. So the strategic location of Los Angeles, gateway to Asia, and particularly the land mass that was available, made LA the place where this gigantic port developed, which as we all know, is the San Pedro Bay port complex. LA-Long Beach is now the largest in North America.

So all of that was just developing, and what was happening is because the strength of the ILWU was always the master contract to me and the fact that that contract spelled out everything, but it also meant it was a bear to administer. And what Dave was finding is that the officers were consumed with enforcing the contract, administering the contract, the grievance procedure, taking in new members, and so on. Dave explained to me the history of the ILWU, and that whenever you heard about protesting the war, people on strike, refusing to load cargo, it generally meant Local 10. It meant Northern California, that Southern California was actually a relatively conservative area in which many times when Harry came down, he was booed at the local in Wilmington, including by Dave.

And of course, while all of this was happening, I met Dave's parents, Honest Lou and Rose Arian, who had a tremendous effect on me. Honest Lou, who always was known as a good, honest trade unionist, and Rose who was the political person who was having fundraisers when Dave was a young boy and telling him how to raise money, and saying, "Dave, make some cupcakes, all these women will love you. You'll sell them, you'll make money." So she was training Dave to be a fundraiser, and he was learning about politics from his mother and the trade union from his father. One of the most moving stories I ever heard Dave tell was his memories as a young boy of being in the dark, and I mean as a five or six year old boy, being in the dark, being at a vigil, women dressed in black, crying and carrying candles, and it was a vigil for the Rosenbergs. And that was one of Dave's very, very first memories. And he told the story so many times, and it had a profound effect on me. My parents weren't political at all, so I didn't have any of this history. I mean, my mother's family was involved with the union, but they weren't political in the sense of left wing politics the way Rose and Lou Arian were.

So I learned all that from Rose and Lou, and what all this was leading up to is that Dave very much was committed to what he saw as the principles that Harry Bridges stood for: the right of everyone to belong to a free trade union, internationalism, social justice, civil rights, education and organization. That's what Dave thought the ILWU should be about. But it wasn't taking place from the level of the officers, at least in a big local like Southern California, you know, Local 13, which now has eight thousand members, over eleven hundred members in the clerks, five hundred members in Local 94, incredible numbers. So these union officers had their hands full with the contract and the membership. Dave wanted a vehicle to channel all these principles that he thought Harry stood for. And of course, getting the officers to take a position on these things was sometimes very difficult.

So people were always calling, "What does the ILWU think about this, that or the other?" And of course, at that time, you couldn't get to the officers. They were too busy! So the Harry Bridges Institute was formed by Dave and me and a number of other people up and down the coast to address those issues and to be a bridge between the labor movement and the community. And of course, at the time, not many people understood that the trade union movement was the organized section of the labor movement, but the labor movement was anyone that worked for a living. So there were these vast numbers of people that didn't belong to a union, but their hearts were with the union, and they wanted to fight for the same things the union did. We wanted the HBI to be that bridge, and we were able to initiate many very successful programs.

HARVEY 00:40:43

Yeah, absolutely, including a--

DIANE 00:40:47

Want to hear about some of them?

HARVEY 00:40:49

Sure, go ahead.

DIANE 00:40:50

All right, so the things that the Harry Bridges Institute did is, believe it or not, in 1991 no one in Southern California was celebrating the birthday of Cesar Chavez. So we started an annual Cesar Chavez dinner honoring labor heroes. And our theory was, without mentioning any unions by name, that we didn't want to be like those unions that had officers collecting pensions from four different entities, from the regional and the conference and the national and on and on. Dave was proud of the tradition the ILWU had that its officers, particularly in Local 13, served a number of years in paid positions and then had to go back to work. They didn't have lifetime jobs. So our idea was that a true labor hero was a good union man or woman who went to the job every day, protected the job, lived up to the contract, and did a hard day's work for a good day's pay. Maybe volunteered to coach his kids' softball game, maybe was active in his church, but he wasn't a hot shot. Nobody ever gave him an award. And our theory was, those are the people we should be honoring. Those are the true labor heroes. And we had to start teaching our children this is who you look up to.

So we started the Cesar Chavez labor tribute dinners, and they were wildly successful. We'd have three, four hundred people. We'd honor nine or ten people a year, and it would be an opportunity for these workers to tell their story. It would be printed up in a nice booklet. They'd ask their families, they'd get an award, we'd talk about them, and it was a way of honoring the working man. Now, even though this was the nineties, history being what it is and unions being what they are, we found that when we went to the locals and said, Give us your nomination for the Cesar Chavez dinner, they did, and they were about 90% men. So we thought, well, we know there's a lot of great women out there what are we going to do about that? So we started the Cesar Chavez annual luncheon honoring working class women heroes. And we started having a parallel event in the fall in which we would honor the women heroes. And of course, there were many. So we did this for twenty years.

So one thing we did were these dinners, and they were very successful people really liked them. We also had an educational program, and I kind of was, you know, very involved with that. And we would go into the high schools and tell them about the history of our union. And once more, the reason we were able to do these things is because this was us. Dave remembered going to San Pedro High and them bringing in speakers from IBM. And he'd say, "Well, I want to talk about the union," and the teachers were dismissive. Couldn't talk about the union. Who cared that your father was a longshoreman, much less a shipyard worker? So we wanted to turn that around. So we wanted to start introducing labor history and labor education into the high schools. And we did it. And what we found was the trick was that for these high school students--and again, generalizations are always tough--they didn't so much listen to or relate to their parents, but they sure did their grandparents. So we had the pensioners going into the schools and telling the stories to their grandchildren of what the union was about. And that was a pretty successful program. And we also had boat tours because we thought, what better way to teach high school and college students about the global economy than to take them on a boat tour of the LA-Long Beach harbor, where they would see these vessels from Taiwan and Japan and various places, and we would go through what were they carrying, where did those products come from, how were they made, and so on. So it was a really interesting experience.

So we did the boat tours, the dinners, and the education program, and I think we did a lot of good with the Harry Bridges Institute. Pretty happy, we've wrapped up now. We also had a video program, and the last thing we did was a five part series called "Families of the Waterfront," because the idea was that longshore, by the time we

reached 2010, 2015, was such a wildly successful occupation that it wasn't just that a man could go to work and earn a good living, but he could now send his kids to college, and his kids could become professors and teachers and scientists with the wages that were earned on the waterfront, and we wanted to tell those stories. And we did. We picked five families and made this amazing series of videos called "Working Families of the Waterfront" that highlighted the breadth of what was happening with these waterfront families.

HARVEY 00:46:39

That's great. Was there any involvement with the starting of the labor parades? It had become so frequent, not frequent, but annually in San Pedro?

DIANE 00:46:51

Yes, and I remember when the first one started. The first one started in 1978. It was the year I moved here, and I remember it for a number of reasons. There was a very big labor dispute involving the SIU [Seafarers International Union] and the IBU [Inland Boatmen's union]. And the IBU had certain jobs in the tugboat industry in which there were just certain working conditions--they had fought hard for a contract. The SIU came in and through a legal theory called accretion, they said that they had acquired some of these companies and that the master contract that they had for workers in the south should be applied to workers in Southern California. And it was a tremendous change of working conditions, and I remember it very well, because my husband, Dale McConnachie, was a member of the IBU at the time, and he was one of the people that lost his job. The AFL-CIO Maritime Trades did nothing. They sided with the SIU, and it became clear that the workers in the harbor in Southern California needed their own voice. So something was formed by David Arian, and we had to come up with all these initials. And his good buddy David Day, who later changed his name because it wasn't Irish enough, so he changed it from David Day to David Riley O'Day--and the two Davids, along with Bob Forrester and a number of others, started the Harbor Coalition. And the Harbor Coalition was an area of local--was an organization, no structure, no officers. Anybody who had a beef could call a meeting and ask for help, but it had to come from the workers. It wasn't anybody from on high saying, "There's an issue going on at the canneries, let's go help those people." The cannery workers had to say, "This is what we're fighting for. We need support. Will the labor movement help us?" So that was the Harbor Coalition. And from the harbor coalition, they started the Harbor Labor Day Parade, and it started in 1978. It has happened every year since, and I think I've been to every single one. And it is now the largest parade in Southern California. There were thousands this last year.

HARVEY 00:49:21

Were you involved at all with the parade? I somehow got the idea that you might have been involved with helping it or helping it get started?

DIANE 00:49:28

No. I mean, I knew about it. And of course, when you say helping it get started, we all did what we could. We all marched in the parade. It was the union members that served the food and that kind of thing. But I was not on any of the organizing committees of the parade.

HARVEY 00:49:46

Okay. Hey Diane, I have kind of another section here. My title is politics. I gather you ran for [Los Angeles] City Council in 1993?

DIANE 00:50:00

I did.

HARVEY 00:50:02

How come you decided to do that? How did that come about?

DIANE 00:50:06

Well, I had been very, very active. And while Dave's focus was absolutely--he was laser focused on the ILWU and really didn't do much else of anything. My interests were a lot more broad, and I was concerned about welfare rights, housing. At the time, nobody thought of it. The term hadn't been invented of income inequality, but it was beginning to be very clear to me, and just like there was that period in my very young life when it was which side were you on? As the years went by and I gained more and more experience and talked to dozens and hundreds and thousands of workers, a couple other things became clear to me. And those principles were very simple: First, there is such a thing as enough. And when you have a job and you have a house and a car and a retirement, that's really enough. I mean, you don't need to be amassing wealth, right? It's how much do you need, particularly when you look at other people in the world? So the first concept that I kept rolling around in my head was there is such a thing as enough. Secondly, there's something fundamentally wrong with a global system where a handful of people have enormous wealth. And today, of course, it accrues virtually billions a month, but a handful of people have enormous wealth, and the majority of the world struggles for a clean source of drinking water. Gotta be something wrong with the system like that, to say nothing of everything in between, like lack of polio vaccines and on and on and on. So the second principle was this system isn't working. It isn't working for the vast majority of people. And then the third principle was what are you going to do about it? And it became clear to me that nothing can be done without an organization. And for the working man or woman, that basic defense organization was a trade union. And it became increasingly clear that there was a struggle to unionize, but at least to get people thinking in terms of organization, even if it was a block club. I mean, I often said that with these left wing, you know, politically correct groups, they were organizing according to one version or another of Marxist theory, and the only problem was that the average Southern Californian was trying to get motivated to join a block club, and you had to start where people were at.

So as I looked at all those things, it seemed that one good vehicle would be political office, and I had hopes of changing the system through working within it and having a voice. So I ran for the Los Angeles City Council in 1993, and it was a very, very interesting race. There were seven people running: two Democrats--I'm sorry, two Republicans: the incumbent, Joan Milke Flores and Rudy Svorinich, whose father was a longshoreman; and five Democrats. Three of us--well, two of us were very well known, well known to an extent: Janice Hahn, whose father Kenny Hahn was a legendary supervisor; and Warren Furutani, who had been on the school board and had a number of other local positions. And I was the third of the five Democrats. Well, needless to say, what happened was the five Democrats carved up the vote, allowing the two Republicans to finish one and two.

So because I was the top finisher in San Pedro among the Democrats, the first person Rudy Svorinich came to was me, because I had had a lot of longshore votes. So given the choice of Joan Milke Flores or Rudy Svorinich, I supported Rudy. And when he won and beat Joan Flores, he came to me, as is customary in political races of this sort, and he had asked me what role I would want to have in his administration were he to be elected. And of course, I said harbor commissioner, Port of LA. That's what I wanted. But at the time when Rudy won, so did Richard Riordon. Richard Riordon won as mayor, and there was no way a wealthy individual like Richard Riordon was going to let Rudy Svorinich put one of his picks on the Harbor Commission. Riordon had that slotted for his rich friends and bankers and investment people, so I didn't get the Harbor Commission. But Rudy in kind of classic fashion--and you could either roll your eyes and decry this statement, or you could say, "That's Pedro." Rudy tells me that as he was having the discussion with his staff of, "What are we going to do with Diane? She was a big supporter. We have to offer her something." The comment was made, "I know. How about the Housing Authority? She likes those people." So I became a commissioner of the Housing Authority of the City of LA, which in 1993 meant the twenty-one projects, euphemistically renamed "housing

developments." So I served as a Housing Authority commissioner under Riordon from '93 to '98, and that was the first political appointment I had.

HARVEY 00:56:27

Okay, I see. Wow. I have also the initials B-O-N-L and B-O-H-C.

DIANE 00:56:34

Two other interesting ones. So I served on the Housing Authority from '93 to '98. Every commission job I've had, I either have found that the executive director is controlling to the point of wanting to keep you from getting anything done, or it's just a roundabout way of diminishing what is supposed to be citizen power. The theory of how all this works is that we have a mayor, fifteen city council people, and three hundred city commissioners. The city commissioners are appointed by the mayor. They do not get paid anything. It is strictly a volunteer job, and some of them are really a lot of work. So after five years on the Housing Authority, '93 to '98, during which I still had a full legal practice and was still really involved with a lot of other community things, it became clear to me that with the director at the Housing Authority, who literally told staff, "You are not allowed to talk to any commissioners, any piece of paper you give them has to pass my eyes first." I mean, he was that controlling with information, and with twenty-one housing developments? I mean, I literally would have needed a team of investigators to find out what was going on in each development and what the issues were, because all of these were little microcosms of city politics with different factions, and government money was starting to come in. It was just obvious I wasn't going to get anything done. So I resigned from the Housing Authority at that time in '98.

The political climate changed. Antonio Villaraigosa was elected mayor, and he needed a commissioner for the Board of Neighborhood Commissioners, which was a body that supervised the ninety-five neighborhood councils that had come about as a result of charter reform. When they tried to persuade me to take the job because they didn't want it, they said, you know, it was pitched as participatory democracy. "This is how people participate from below, right?" Well, I didn't quite have visions of Cuba's, you know, neighborhoods for the defense of the revolution, but I actually did think it would have something to do with participatory democracy. And of course, it didn't. It was the same old same old of elderly white homeowners wanting another vehicle to talk about their views for the city to the--I don't want to say, not derogation. I don't even know if there is such a word, not to the detriment of other people. They didn't take into account unemployed people, renters, people with kids. You know, how do you attract somebody to a neighborhood council, unless you have something that's in their interests, you know, that's going to offer them something? It was another vehicle for white homeowners. After a couple years, I decided also not worth my time.

So I finally got a commission job I liked. In 2019 after Dave passed, Mayor [Eric] Garcetti asked me if I wanted to take Dave's role on the Board of Harbor Commissioners and be a commissioner for the Board of Harbor Commissioners of the Port of LA. And when he called me, you know, we sort of had this half-hour conversation with him saying, "Who do you think I should appoint?" And I mentioned this union guy and that union guy, because Dave's position was obviously a union slot. So I hung up, and later that evening, Dave's son Sean, called me. And Sean had worked in the Villaraigosa administration, but knew politically--his husband was a city councilman, so he was very involved. And his husband, Mike Bonin, had supported Garcetti and had a close relationship with Garcetti, so Sean knew it was happening. Sean called me and said, "So how'd your conversation with Eric go?" And I said, "Well, he just wanted to know who do I think should be the harbor commissioner." And there was a pause, and he said, "Really, Diane?" I said, "Yeah?" He said, "That was a job offer. He was offering you the job." And I was quite surprised, and said, "Oh, I don't know if I could do it." I said, "For one thing, no one could ever replace your father." And Sean said, "You know what? You're absolutely right. No one could replace my father, but it's also true that no one would carry out my father's legacy the way

you would, and that's why Mike and I think you have to take that job, because you share the same beliefs Dave did, and you will fight on the Harbor Commission for the same things Dave did."

HARVEY 01:01:59

That's great.

DIANE 01:02:01

And that persuaded me to call Eric back and say, "Never mind. Let's start this conversation again." And I became a harbor commissioner.

HARVEY 01:02:10

Wanted to ask you about that a little bit later, about being harbor commissioner in recent times. But you founded the Diane Middleton Foundation in 1998?

DIANE 01:02:10

Yes.

HARVEY 01:02:12

Have we kind of covered what the goal was there or not?

DIANE 01:02:36

Well, we covered about fifty, sixty percent of it, and that was that by now, we're up to 1998, I've decided to leave the Housing Authority Commission job. And these commission jobs, by the way, if you do them right, they're fifteen to twenty hours a week of unpaid labor. I mean, it's not going to one meeting a month. The Board of Neighborhood Commissioners, for instance, met everywhere in the city. So I mean, to get to a 6:30 meeting in Granada Hills from San Pedro, I'd have to leave at 3:30 in the afternoon, and I wouldn't get back till 11 at night. So I mean, these were very, very time-consuming positions.

But in 1998 I had left the Housing Authority. I still had the law firm, and by now, I had been in private practice around twenty years, and a lot of the asbestos cases had settled. And you know, I really was making some fair money. And that's when I came up with that concept. I told you those three principles, that really was the basis of forming the Diane Middleton Foundation, the idea that I had enough money. What was I going to be, you know, piling up money for? So I donated one million dollars to start the Diane Middleton Foundation. And the principles were real simple, grandiose but simple: that we wanted to fund what no one else would. That we wanted to deal not with the symptoms of capitalism gone awry, but we wanted to deal with causes.

So the example I always used was that if you came to us and said, "We want a grant to feed the hungry," we would say, "Feeding the hungry is an admirable goal, and we hope you do that. But lots of people will give you money for that. We're not going to give you money to feed more people, but if you want to organize those hungry people to go to the Department of Agriculture and protest the fact that the US government destroys millions of pounds of food every year to keep the prices artificially high, we'll give you money for that." So we made it clear we funded organizing projects, we funded education projects. And since this was 1998, we of course had tons of people asking us for money. The favorite one, which we'd almost all--I don't want to say laugh at, because we weren't being derisive, but we got all these applications for funding for cadre development. And my classic response was, "For what purpose, along what lines? The John Birch Society wants to develop cadre. Tell me a little more. What are you going to do?"

So we had an outstanding board. I think our first board was, of course, Dave, because Dave and I did everything together; Dave and me, Hector Cepeda, and I don't know if these were on the first [board], the ones that were the mainstays of the Diane Middleton Foundation: Dave; me; Goetz Wolff, a UCLA [University of California Los Angeles] professor of urban planning, who also was affiliated with the labor center and really started to develop that whole idea of corporate campaigns and how to approach organizing from a multi-faceted view; Lewis Wright, a working longshoreman at the time; an interesting young guy named Pete White, who was a founder of the Los Angeles Community Action Network, which today, I think, is the leading progressive organization fighting on behalf of and partnering with unhoused individuals. So we had a board of seven people. Dave's sister Lorraine was on the board for a while.

And what we did is we had small grants. Our biggest grant was five thousand bucks. We would fund what no one else would. And we wanted outcomes. We wanted to know, what are you going to do with the money? And don't say you're going to end poverty and racism with five thousand dollars. Tell me what the outcome is that's measurable, because we aren't giving away money. We want to know what you're doing. And then we had grantee conferences, when we would bring all these people together from different areas, and I'm really proud of the work we did.

We funded almost three hundred separate projects in the amount of about 1.5 million over the course of twenty years, and maybe our two most outstanding grants or grantees was the Los Angeles Community Action Network, which was Pete White's organization, which trained the unhoused to fight for themselves; and then a fledgling group called the Coalition for Educational Justice: parents, teachers, students. And what they started in 1998, they said things like, "We want to end standardized testing," which we thought, of course, was ridiculous. Never get rid of standardized testing. Well, all I will tell you is the person that applied for that first grant was Alex Caputo-Pearl, who went on to become the president of the United Teachers of LA and just an outstanding labor leader over the course of the next twenty years. So they did a great job. That organization has now morphed into schools students deserve, and they're fighting the presence of armed police in the schools, and they've come up with these interesting concepts. You know, why is it that in Black schools, kids are disciplined, but police are called in and they're expelled, and in white schools, they give students counseling and talk about something called restorative justice? I mean, they highlighted all these tremendous disparities, even today.

So I was real proud of the work we did based on those three principles. And like all organizations, it ran its course and disbanded after about twenty years. But we did a lot of good work, and it put me in touch. I mean, I'm still running into people all over the city that were DMF grantees. So it was a good period, a good effort.

HARVEY 01:09:28

Yeah, that's very helpful. I want to ask you one question: you were with Dave Arian until 2008, did I get that right?

DIANE 01:09:40

Say that again?

HARVEY 01:09:42

You were close with Dave Arian until 2008?

DIANE 01:09:45

No. Dave Arian and I met in 1976. I came out here in 1978. We lived together as domestic partners until 1983. We were the closest of political allies until he passed in 2019. January 2, 2019.

HARVEY 01:10:03

Right, 2019 is my--yeah, I gather, yeah, which is also the time you become harbor commissioner?

DIANE 01:10:18

Yes, because I took Dave's position. Dave had been vice president of the Harbor Commission, and when he passed, that seat was vacant.

HARVEY 01:10:27

Right. I have written down some notes that I got regarding that period of being commissioner...

DIANE 01:10:37

But they won't make any sense, so let me tell you the story. And this is the last chapter, really. I don't know if your notes have it, but this is kind of the last thing I have to talk about, and that is the Port of Los Angeles Harbor Commission.

HARVEY 01:10:52

Yeah.

DIANE 01:10:52

And it's really a vehicle to discuss what's happening in ports around the world. I assumed the seat on the Harbor Commission at a pivotal time in its history. Dave was diagnosed with the illness that eventually took his life in the summer of 2018. Right about that time, they were starting to talk about automation at the largest terminal in the port: APM, AP Moller, also known as Maersk, occupying five hundred acres of land, our largest tenant. And we talk about it as the decision to automate, but really what the Harbor Commission had to do was issue a permit for APM to make some changes to their property that would enable them to install the infrastructure that would provide for zero emission or battery-powered equipment, which also was going to be automated. Now, when that came to the Harbor Commission, Dave was ill. They didn't want to take up that issue with Dave gone because he, of course, was the ILWU representative. And it's worth noting parenthetically that for the last thirty years, there had been an ILWU representative on the Harbor Commission. Out of the five commissioners, one was always an ILWU person for the last thirty years. Joe Radisich, you know, different people over the years, Tommy Warren, different people had that seat.

Okay, so they didn't know how long Dave's illness was going to last, and it reached the point where he could no longer attend Harbor Commission meetings. And this was probably by September, October of 2018. They kept putting it off. Dave passed on January second, and they knew then that they would have to act on this Maersk petition to modify the property for which they needed Harbor Commission approval. Okay, I am absolutely rushed through the confirmation process. Dave passes January second, Garcetti talks to me [at] the end of January. I'm interviewed by the mayor, go through the different committees, go to City Council, I'm sworn in. My first meeting is March 7th of 2019. My second meeting is not in our regular Harbor Commission meeting room, it is at the passenger cruise terminal, because there are two thousand people in attendance. And the reason they're in attendance is because the permit for Maersk is on the agenda. And in the intervening months, one of the most brilliant labor leaders I've met [in] the forty, fifty years I've been doing this, Gary Herrera, who is currently president of Local 13, was vice president at that time. And Gary Herrera had organized the community and the casuals to fight this permit. And I don't know if this is the place and how much you want me to talk about all the arguments that were made against automation, but I'll sort of give you the legal framework and the political framework.

Alright, so Gary was organizing these marches, and he had rallied hundreds and thousands of people to fight automation, and they saw it as the fight against automation. They did not see it as any kind of permit. They saw it as the fight against automation. Okay, that's my second meeting as a commissioner. And in the lead up to it, the first thing I do is, as any good lawyer would, say, "Well, what does the contract say?" And I looked at the contract, and as near as I could see, the contract said, "The employers get to automate, and they have to make sure that any new jobs are given to the ILWU." And of course, as I investigated it more, I was told that when this was negotiated many, many years before 2019, there was a tremendous trade off, and that trade off was millions of dollars in additional pension benefits. So the employer's position was, "We bargained. We bargained in good faith, and you got a lot of extra pension money, and we got the right to automate. Go away. There's nothing to talk about." But as I looked at it more, I thought, wait a second. And as you probably will know, there are all these little idioms that come into popular play, words we never heard about before. And about this time, a very popular term being used was silos, sort of like, stay in your own lane, right? And the idea was that a silo was this contained area where things were happening.

So I looked at all this and I thought, wait a second, there's a silo over here, called the PMA and the ILWU. They've negotiated a contract. That doesn't have anything to do with me. I'm a harbor commissioner. As a harbor commissioner, my job is to make sure that the property at the Port of LA, which is owned by the Tidelands Trust, and as such, is held in trust for the people of the state of California, that that property is managed in such a way that it benefits the people of the state of California. So I looked at that, and I thought, this contract language doesn't have anything to do with us. How is this property being managed? And as I read the criteria for granting a level one permit, I realized that it included things like you had to take into account traffic mitigation and this, that, and the other. And there seemed to be passing mention of environmental impacts, but I made the argument, how can we talk about the right to clean air if you can't put food on the table? There has to be and study of the economic impacts. How can you possibly grant a permit for development without looking at what it's going to do to the industry, the local community, the local workforce, the dentist, the cleaners, and so on?

So I took a careful look at that application. And first of all, I found the application to be ridiculously deficient in that when the head of Maersk was asked questions like, "How many jobs do you think this will displace?" The answer was, "No idea." They didn't even answer it! They simply ignored all the things in this, thinking it would get rubber stamped. And my thing was absolutely not. So it was a very contentious hearing. It went on for months. That hearing was absolved with nothing happening, or we were adjourned with nothing happening. There were Harbor Commission meetings in between. There was another large meeting that had another two, three thousand people. And I mean, these were very contentious meetings with the membership and the community, dozens of speakers, and speakers from the community that stood up to fight for the ILWU. I mean, Gary did a masterful job, and the other people he had working with him, of organizing this community.

So it was quite a battle. It waged from March until August. Mayor Garcetti became involved. There were certain agreements that were reached. And the bottom line was when it came down to the vote, once again showing how important these commission appointments are, of the five commissioners--we won't use any names, of course--the real estate commissioner voted yes, give them the permit. The wealthy Brentwood housing developer said, "Yes, let's give them a permit." I said no. A local person from Pedro who, although not in the industry, he was an engineer, grew up in this community, he said no. And the swing vote was a Latina. And I will say this: There is a struggle which I totally support for diversity, equity, and inclusion on all the commissions. Mayor Bass's stated position when she took office was she wanted the majority of her commissioners to be female and Latina. So certainly, with the demographics that have changed in the state of California, I am heartily in favor of Latinos having seats at the table that reflect the contributions they are making to the state. But I also believe that important as that in question is, the first one always has to be, which

side are you on? And I would put out there that in the desire to have a diverse board, there wasn't sufficient interest to what would be the political interests. And they had a Latina but a very, very conservative one who voted with the developer and the banker, right? And it was a 3-2 vote.

So we knew the permit was going to be granted, and the question was just what else was going to happen. And there was a lot of lip service and motions by our then-councilman Joe Buscaino to have a blue ribbon committee to study automation. None of that happened. Okay? So it was a very bitter struggle, and its aftermath is still being felt. And the union now understands--I mean, fortunately, we have a councilman now, Tim McOsker, who really, really understands the issues. And he says his two main things that he's fighting for are jobs in the environment. And he wanted to revisit the Maersk permit, and he wanted to see what happened. And of course, what he found is that Maersk said they were going to put in zero emission equipment. Wrong, that never happened. Maersk said they were going to fully automate. That did happen. Maersk said they were going to lose a lot of workers. That happened. And Maersk was quite bold during these hearings in saying, "No, it's not going to increase productivity. It'll probably be a boondoggle." They were doing it for one reason: to cut labor costs. So they said straight up in these hearings, "We want to get rid of ILWU jobs," and that's exactly what happened. And that's why we can never let it happen again. And that's why our current Councilman McOsker has said he is opposed to automation, and why that has been a critical question now. Will there be another terminal in LA that will automate? So my tenure as a commissioner began with this tremendous question of the Maersk terminal and what was going to go on.

HARVEY 01:23:44

My impression is this was fairly recently, you were not appointed to the commission by Mayor Bass in 2024. Do you have any--would you like to mention something about that?

DIANE 01:23:58

Sure, I think the other thing I would say is I served on the commission for five and a half years. I believe that every major department head that serves under a mayor should have a mandate from the mayor in terms of what do they want to do. I believe that Garcetti's mandate, now that we know he is reinventing himself as an international diplomat, his mandate to the executive director was, "Make me number one," and that happened. LA is the number one port in the northern hemisphere. That happened. Mayor Bass has not really announced any goals for the harbor. She has made the determination that the major question facing Los Angeles is homelessness, and she is devoting a tremendous amount of energy to solving that problem, and it is a crisis, so no one can falter for that. But I have not heard the mayor announce a clear direction for the Port of LA, and that's what I feel is the question before us.

I believe we are in an age where we can no longer talk about, "How many TEU's [twenty-foot equivalent unit] are we moving? Of course, we want a lot of cargo, of course we want volume. It means jobs. Of course we want this to be the number one port. But I always feel compelled to point out that if LA does ten million TEU's, our sister port, Long Beach, does 9.7. So if we're talking about a difference of 300,000 TEU's, that's 150,000 cans. And that's probably about fifteen, twenty vessel calls, which any executive director can fiddle with and change from one port to another.

So my thing is whether you're number one or number two, the issue is not TEU's. I believe that what we should be talking about are things like job development. We have a project called AltaSea at Outer Harbor that calls for the creation of a blue economy. We've all heard of a green economy: solar, wind, environmental stuff. The blue economy is jobs based on the ocean, and Alta Sea is developing jobs. And just like thirty years ago, nobody knew what a webmaster was. They're developing jobs like underwater robotics, mapping of the ocean, amazing new jobs, aquaculture. I mean, we can't keep burning up all the energy we do to produce one pound of beef. We

ought to find another way to feed our population and another way to deal with these horrendous climate changes. So AltaSea is going to be the future. It is going to be a research center, it's the first of its kind in the United States, where marine scientists come together from all the major universities to talk about how to develop the ocean.

We also are developing the Goods Movement Training Center, which is a \$150 million project that Dave conceived of. In the six years since Dave passed, nothing has happened with it. We got a grant of \$110 million from the state of California, but we have yet to turn a shovel in six years. I think we should be paying more attention to the Goods Movement Training Center. And even though, of course, we need a centralized area to train the longshore workforce, we also need to talk about those tens of thousands of young people in LA that are not going to be lucky enough to get an A book. What are their jobs going to be? What is their relationship going to be to this global economy, and how can we train them? And how can we partner with organizations like our local Boys and Girls Club of the harbor, which has bases at twenty-four different sites and has started not only a college bound program, but a career bound, where they're trying to get kids ready that aren't going to go to college. So my position would be that we should be focusing on AltaSea, the Goods Movement Training Center, and getting to zero emission and doing what we can to keep pushing, and that that's what the focus of ports should be, and counting TEU's doesn't matter. Counting TEU's matters. It shouldn't be the number one thing we talk about all the time.

So I think I was replaced because of a number of things. I don't know why the mayor didn't reappoint me. Up until the day I got the call saying the mayor is not reappointing you, the ILWU through Gary Herrera had been assured my term was up June 30th. Forty-five days for the mayor to reappoint or appoint someone new, or reappoint or replace. On day forty-four, I got the call. Gary Herrera had been told by the deputy mayor up until that day, "We have no plans to replace Diane." So we don't know why it happened. It was a total double-cross, and the community was very unhappy about it. And I'm happy to say there's a somewhat happy ending in that and a fine way to perhaps end this interview. Just like the pensioners have a saying, "Retired from the job, but not the struggle," my saying was, "Replaced on the commission, but forever in the community," because I have taken a new job, and I am now the senior advisor on port affairs to Councilman McOsker, and I will continue to work on these issues and continue to fight for the ILWU and this community, because the ILWU gave me everything I have, and I will be forever grateful.

HARVEY 01:30:35

Thank you, Diane. I do have one more question.

DIANE 01:30:37

Okay.

HARVEY 01:30:40

You were made an honorary member of Local 13 in 2023. Could you talk about that a little? What was that like?

DIANE 01:30:49

Great, except I was the seventh person since 1934 and I must honestly say it was the honor of my lifetime. I am very grateful to the ILWU.

HARVEY 01:31:02

That's great, thank you. Conor, what have I missed? Actually, the question goes to both of you, what have I missed? Have I missed something? Conor?

CONOR CASEY 01:31:21

I don't--I've been listening. I don't think you missed anything. Thank you.

DIANE 01:31:26

I'm sorry, Conor, I couldn't hear you.

CONOR 01:31:28

Oh, I was just saying I don't think Harvey missed anything, and I was appreciating how comprehensive you were, Diane.

DIANE 01:31:34

Okay, I was going to say you're probably saying to yourself, "God damn, you went for two and a half hours, girl! What else do you have to say?" No, I have nothing else to say. It was wonderful. You organized it very well, Harvey.

HARVEY 01:31:47

Well, thank you very much. It's been a pleasure to be educated to a great degree by you. And thank you very much for the interview. Much appreciated.